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ABSTRACT

Morphological and syntactical considerations of problems of interference which arise between the mother tongue and the target language are developed in this paper written in English and in French. Linguistically oriented, the article focuses on the identification of different linguistic elements which compose a syntagmatic form. A detailed analysis of the relationships of elements involved in agreement of past participles conjugated with "avoir" is presented with the use of diagrams. (RL)

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MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

WHAT FUTURE TEACHERS OF A SECOND LANGUAGE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEM AND WHY.

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We surely all agree that learning to speak a second language for communication's sake largely depends on conscious imitation through practice as well as on analysis of what native speakers do and say. This entails an excellent knowledge of the target language by the potential teacher as well as a thorough familiarity of the complexity of language considered as a system of systems which interrelates phonology, morphology and syntax.

Much attention has been given to the scientific analysis of the sound systems of languages, indeed for many of them there are contrastive analyses which are readily available to the future teachers. This analysis pinpoints areas of difficulties which will be encountered by speakers of language A. engaged in the learning of language B. That these studies have largely contributed to better enunciation in the classroom is evidented by the students who are now coming into our universities. Many of them have overcome some of the major problems represented by the acquisition of correct intonation and rhythm as well as by certain phonemes or phoneme clusters.

Some attention has also been given to the contrastive analysis of the syntactic and morphologic systems but a great deal of work has yet to be done, especially in the form of synthesis, so that future teachers are made aware of and know how to handle problems of interference which arise between the mother tongue and the target language; how could new linguistic habits be implanted? The beginning teacher who cannot rely on complete linguistic analysis of the target language will lose many years in finding out what the problem areas are and how to establish correct patterns of speech by avoiding the pitfalls in which students fall. Experienced teachers, after a number of years, possess a whole "répertoire" of current mistakes made by their students either at the level of morphology or of syntax.

Lado, as Stern, considers that second language learning takes place when interference with the habits acquired in the mother tongue is progressively eliminated by transfer to new situations of acquired models in the target language which eventually results in the acquisition of new language habits. It seems to us that a basic analysis identifying the problems which derive from the nature of the two languages should underlie the meaningful exercises which will allow students to master new

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patterns in functionnally valid contexts. By "functionnally valid contexts" I mean that many of the paradigmatic exercises will be dropped for their lack of meaningfulness, and so will some of the pattern drills based on pure substitution and/or transformation. So that a structure, at any level, may be transferred to other linguistic contexts it must first and foremost be learned in a meaningful context. The students must be aware of the meaning which is conveyed by the structure they are mastering through imitation and transformation of the variable elements which compose it.

So as to make my purpose more evident I will start by referring to Politzer's visual illustration of the building stones which compose a language; I will compare the building stones chosen at the morphologic and syntactic levels of analysis and suggest some pedagogical approaches which might enable teachers to overcome to some extent the problem caused by the inherent interference which results from learning a second language. I will end by defining a principle which is of prime importance in my opinion, i.e. "the principle of anteriority" which I will illustrate by one example.

In figure no. 1 we have an example of a correspondence of "words" between English and French. At the Syntactical level we observe a pattern of a sentence constituted by a S + V + C.O.D. in French as well as in English.

JE	VOIS	LE	LIVRE
I	SEE	THE	BOOK

Figure no. 1

At the morphological level, however, there arises a problem due to interference with English when I change the subject to "vous".

VOUS	VOY + EZ	LE	LIVRE
YOU	SEE + 0	LE	LIVRE

Figure no. 2

Should we not draw our students' attention to the fact that most of the verbs in French have a different inflection system than the one to which they are accustomed.

Consider only the verbs of the first group in the present tense of the indicative and observe that whereas the only person which changes in the English verb is the third person singular it is precisely one of those which does not change in the oral French paradigm. I sounds as the first and second persons of the singular and as the third person of the plural of most verbs; it also sounds as the second person singular of verbs as irregular as "avoir": /ty a/, /il a/l; "être": /ty$_{\varepsilon}$/, /il$_{\varepsilon}$/;

"aller": /ty va/, /il va/. For a very interesting and useful analysis of verbal forms in French, I would refer you to Fernand Marty's article in Le Francais dans le Monde, no. 57 of June 68.

When students have mastered the similarity of the oral endings of the three persons of the singular and of the third one in the plural, they may be conducted to discover through the analysis of different verbal forms in context the inflections which correspond to the subject forms: /nu/ and /vu/.

Another morphologic problem which strikes me as very difficult to overcome is the agreement of the possessive adjective with the noun which follows it. I wonder whether this could not be overcome by showing the correspondence of such words as "son, sa, etc." to "le and la." Noun determiners in French always agree with the noun which they determine. The difficulty is especially noticeable when the student learns that "his" can be either "son, sa" and so can "her". In English "nose" will be preceded by either "his" or "her" whereas in French it will always be preceded by "son". As a student of mine once said: "In French it's his nose in the middle of her face."

Let us now consider one simple syntactical problem, namely, the position of colour adjectives in French as compared to that of the English ones.

Example: Elle porte une robe bleue.
She wears a blue dress.

Should we not draw the attention of our students to the fact that, generally speaking, French people first direct the listener's attention to the object of which they are speaking then, in a subsequent observation give its colour.

My experience has shown me that when students are made conscious of the different outlook on their surrounding by speakers of another language than their own, they are able to work by following new models and create new sentences. We cannot expect them to analyse the language they are learning and to make up their own systems, where we ourselves often fall short of our aim, students should be taught to discover analogies between structures.

From the above examples it should be apparent that before one sets out to teach a particular form, one should know whether the previous necessary knowledge has been acquired. The "principle of anteriority" which I mentioned earlier derives from an application of the theory of graphs to language and should help to determine what should be known before a new pattern is introduced. The example which I have chosen deals with the agreement of the past participle conjugated with the auxiliary "avoir" when the direct object is placed before it. Though this is an example drawn from the written language it could be applied to oral structures. When teachers become aware of the relations between

known and unknown they can plan themselves the order in which they will teach new patterns.

First the indispensible elements necessary to the understanding and usage of the following concepts are necessary: passed tense and relation between the past participle and the object of the verb conjugated with "avoir". We believe that the best way to make the student aware of the agreement in gender and number of the past participle is to introduce him to it orally by using a verb ending with a sounded consonnant in its feminine form of that past participle for example: "La robe que j'ai prise est bleue."

Considering that the main source of understanding consists first and foremost in identifying the different linguistic elements which compose a syntagmatic form we will make sure that the student has the necessary knowledge to procede to this identification namely:

1. Identification of the past participle conjugated with the auxiliary "avoir".

Example: J'ai pris le livre.
Je l'ai pris.
Le livre que j'ai pris est intéressant.

2. Identification of the direct object.

3. Identification of the gender of the personnal pronoun replacing the noun when the gender is marked:

Example: Je le lui ai pris. Je la lui ai prise.

when the gender is not marked as is the case with "l", "les" or "que".

Example: Le livre que j'ai pris... je l'ai pris.
Les livres que j'ai pris... je les ai pris.
L'image que j'ai prise... je l'ai prise.
Les images que j'ai prises... je les ai prises.

4. Identification of number which varies according to whether the direct object is a personnal pronoun or a relative one.

Example: Je les ai pris or Je les ai prises.
Les livres que j'ai pris... or Les images que j'ai prises.

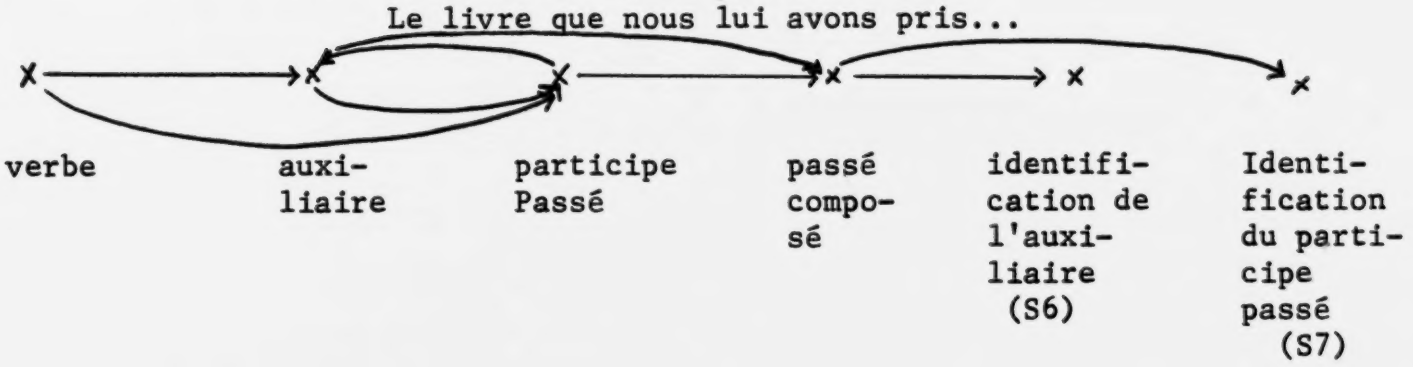
5. Decisions which have to be made with relation to the agreement of the past participle.

The following pages show how we arrive at a valid discrimination of what knowledge must be acquired before students can be asked to master the agreement of the past participle of verbs conjugated with "avoir."

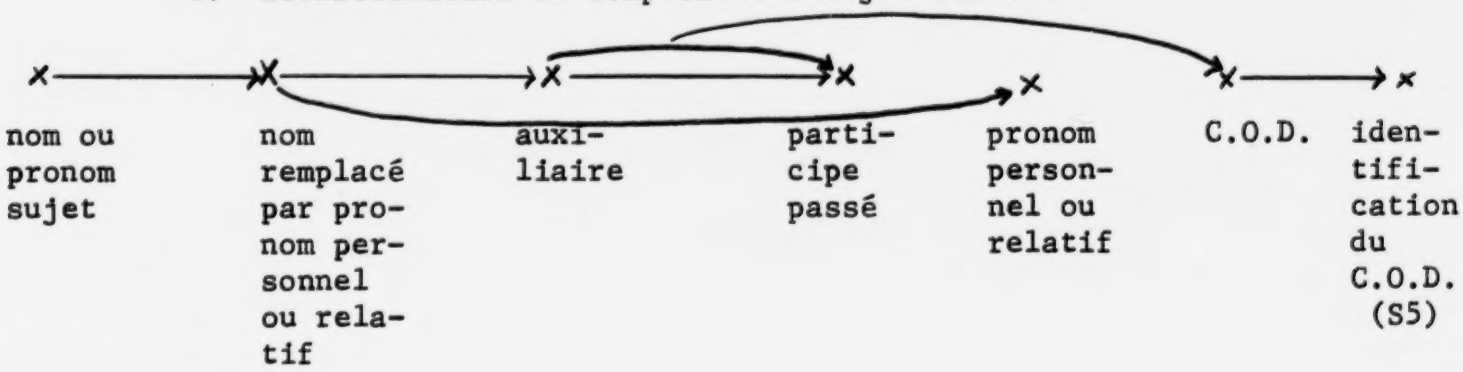
1. Identification du participe passé conjugé avec le verbe auxiliaire "avoir":

Exemple: J'ai pris le livre.
Je l'ai pris.
Le livre que j'ai pris...

Nous avons pris le livre à Paul.
Nous le lui avons pris.
Le livre que nous lui avons pris...

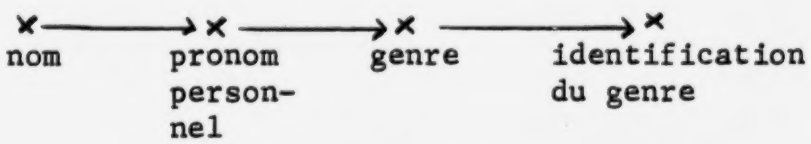


2. Idenfitication du complément d'objet direct:



3. Identification du genre du pronom personnel:
genre marqué:

Premier cas: Exemple: Je <u>le</u> lui ai pris. Je <u>la</u> lui ai pris<u>e</u>.



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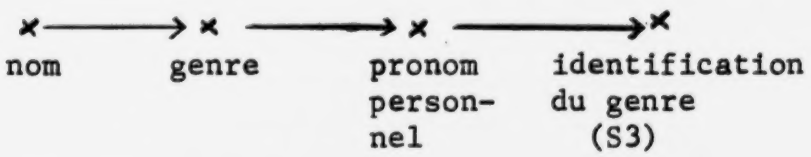
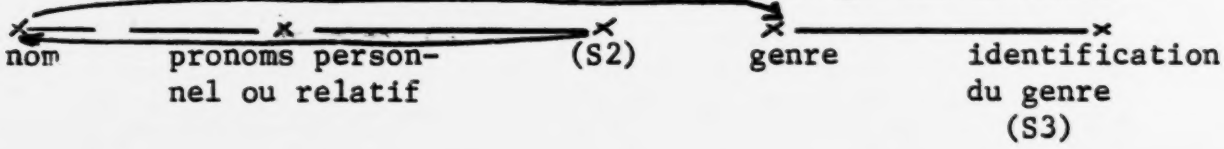


Deuxième cas: genre non-marqué des pronoms personnels "l', les" ou relatif "que".

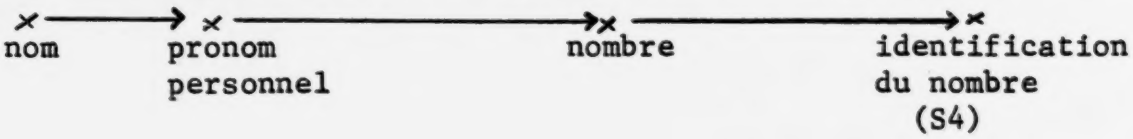
Examples: Le livre que j'ai pris... je l'ai pris.
Les livres que j'ai pris... je les ai pris.
L'image que j'ai prise... je l'ai prise.
Les images que j'ai prises..je les ai prises.



4. Identification du nombre:

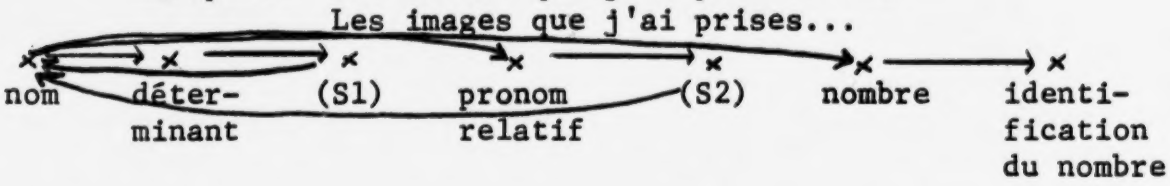
Premier cas: identification du nombre du pronom personnel.

Examples: Je les ai pris ou Je les ai prises.

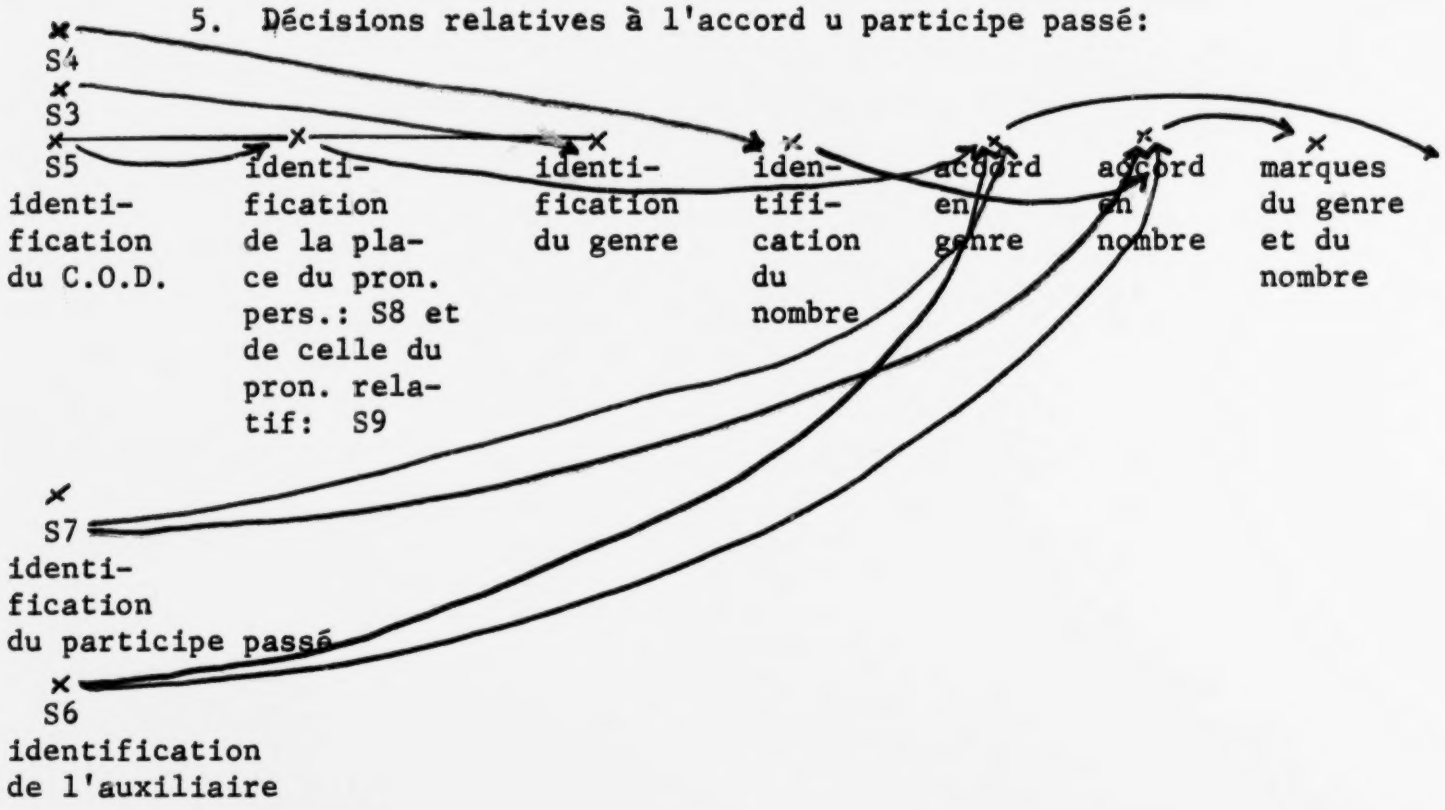


Dexième cas: identification du nombre du pronom relatif.

Examples: Les livres que j'ai pris... ou
Les images que j'ai prises...



5. Décisions relatives à l'accord u participe passé:



Pour résumer les graphes partiels qui précèdent, nous pouvons dire que:

1. Les notions nécessaires à l'identification du problème posé par l'accord du participe passé conjugué avec avoir et son accord avec le complément d'objet direct (C.O.D.) lorsqu'il est placé avant lui sont:

   a. Le nom, genre et nombre.
   b. Le déterminant, genre et nombre.
   c. Le pronom personnel, C.O.D., genre et nombre.
   d. Le pronom relatif, C.O.D., genre et nombre.
   e. Le verbe, radical et qualité (verbe transitif ou intransitif).
   f. Le participe passé du verbe, ses flexions selon le nombre et le genre.
   g. L'auxiliaire, temps simples aux six personnes.
   h. La place du C.O.D. par rapport au participe passé.

2. Les éléments du savoir faire nécessaires sont:

a.	La relation nom/déterminant	S1
b.	La relation nom/pronom	S2
c.	L'identification du genre	S3
d.	L'identification du nombre	S4
e.	L'identification du C.O.D.	S5
f.	L'identification de l'auxiliaire	S6
g.	L'identification du participe passé	S7
h.	L'identification de la place du pronom personnel	S8
i.	L'identification de la place du pronom relatif	S9

Si nous faisons l'iventaire des applications multivoques inverses, nous obtenons:

Pour la marque du nombre:

1.1. {marque du nombre} = {accord en nombre}

{accord du nombre} = {identification du nombre, identification du participe passé, identification de l'auxiliaire}

1.2. {identification du nombre} = {nombre, identification du C.O.D.}

1.3. {nombre} - {nom, pronom personnel}
{n} = {S2}

1.4. {S2} - {pronom relatif} ou {pronom personnel}

1.5. {pronom relatif} - {nom}

1.6. {n} - {S1}

1.7. {S1} - {déterminant}

1.8. {déterminant} - {nom}

Pour la marque du genre:

2.1. {marques du genre} = {accord en genre}

2.2. {accord en genre} - {identification du genre, identification du participe passé, identification de l'auxiliaire}

2.3. {identification du genre} - {genre, identification du C.O.D.}

2.4. {genre} - {nom, pronom personnel}

2.5. {nom} - {S2}

2.6. {S2} - {pronom relatif} ou {pronom personnel}

2.7. {pronom personnel} = {nom}

2.8. {pronom relatif} = {nom}

Pour le complément d'objet direct:

3.1. {identification du C.O.D.} = {C.O.D.}

3.2. {C.O.D.} - {pronom personnel} ou {pronom relatif}

Pour le participe passé et l'auxiliaire:

4.1. {identification du participe passé} = {passé composé}

4.2. {passé composé} = {auxiliaire, participe passé}

4.3. {participe passé} = {verbe, auxiliaire}

4.4. {auxiliaire} = {verbe, participe passé}

4.5. {identification de la place du pronom personnel} - {identification du C.O.D.}

4.6. {identification de la place du pronom relatif} = {identification du C.O.D.}

De ce qui précède nous déduisons les itinéraires possibles suivants:

1. identification du nombre ← nombre ← pron. personnel ← nom
nom ← S2 ← pron. relatif ← n ← S1 ← déterminant ← nom

2. identification du genre ← genre ← pron. personnel ← nom
   nom ← S2 ← pron. relatif ← n ← S1 ← déterminant ← nom

3. identification du C.O.D. ← C.O.D. ← pron. personnel ← nom ← S1
   ← déterminant ← nom
   pron. relatif ← nom ← S1
   ← déterminant ← nom

4. identification du participe passé ← passé composé ← participe passé
   ← auxiliaire ← verbe
   ou: auxiliaire ← participe passé ← verbe

5. identification de l'auxiliaire ← passé composé ← participe passé
   ← auxiliaire ← verbe
   ou: auxiliaire ← participe passé ← verbe

6. identification de la place du C.O.D. ← passé composé ← participe passé ← auxiliaire ← verbe

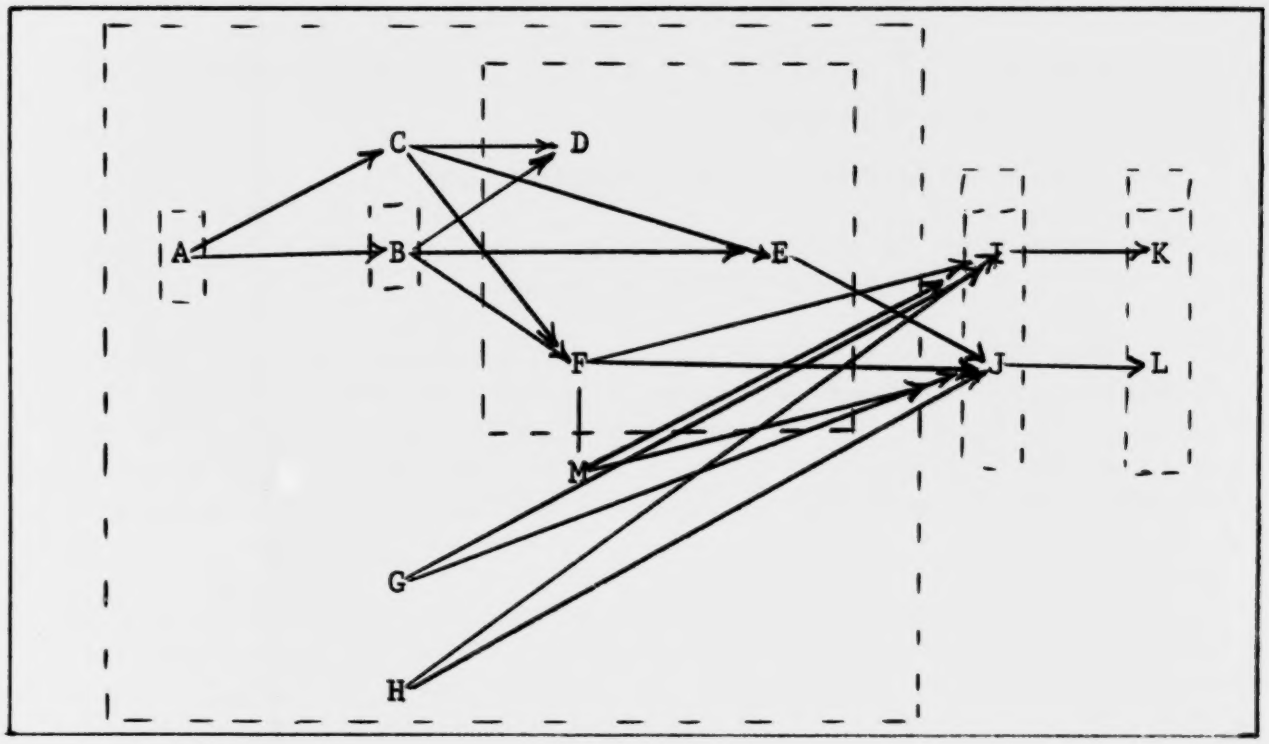
On remarque que prises globalement ces séquences sont relativement indépendantes les unes des autres: pour l'accord en nombre il suffit que 1, 3, 4, et 5 se rencontrent, tandis que pour l'accord en genre il faut la rencontre de 2, 3, 4, et 5. Par contre les agencements internes de 1, 2, 3, sont stricts tandis que ceux de 4 et 5 peuvent varier.

Si l'on fragmente les séquences et que l'on représente les divers fragments par des symboles on obtient les données suivantes qui permettent de dessiner le graphe de la figure suivante. Celui-ci met en relief que si certaines séquences sont indépendantes entre elles, toutes doivent être connues avant que l'on puisse introduire l'accord du participe passé.

A	nom, déterminant, S1
B	nom, pronom relatif, S2
C	nom, pronom personnel, S2
D	genre identification du genre
E	nombre et identification du nombre
F	identification du C.O.D. et C.O.D. identification et place du pronom relatif identification et place du pronom personnel
G	verbre, passé composé, identification de l'auxiliaire
H	verbe, identification du participe passé

I accord en genre
J accord en nombre
K marque du genre
L marque en nombre
M place du C.O.D.

GRAPHE ILLUSTRANT L'ACCORD DU PARTICIPE PASSE
CONJUGUE AVEC "AVOIR"



Ce graphe indique clairement que l'on peut enseigner indépendamment A et B, que D, E, F doivent être présentes simultanément que G, H, M font partie de l'ensemble A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, M tandis que I, J, et K, L, sont deux ensembles indépendants mais que I, J, doit être connu avant que l'on puisse enseigner K, L.